



# City of Seattle Planning Framework

In order to establish a city-wide vision and ensure consistent implementation of this vision between multiple departments and projects, the City of Seattle has developed plans and policy documents that guide all of our work. The City's Comprehensive Plan provides the highest level discussion of our city-wide vision including a discussion of core values and overarching city-wide policies. The overall vision of the Comprehensive Plan and its core values are further articulated through a number of key city-wide strategies as well as a variety of plans and policy documents that articulate how city-wide goals are applied to specific government functions or geographic areas. This document summarizes these policies and documents and outlines how they relate to each other.

## FOUR CORE VALUES

The City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan establishes four core values:

- **Community:** a belief in the importance of developing strong connections between a diverse range of people and places in order to find common goals, develop desirable and innovative ways to achieve these goals, and create a sense of belonging and joint ownership.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** a desire to protect and improve the quality of our global and local natural environment to maximize the benefits of this resource, enhance the health of people and nature, and provide a legacy for future generations.
- **Economic Opportunity and Security:** an understanding that a strong economy and a pathway to employment is fundamental to maintaining the quality of life in Seattle in order that individuals may meet their basic needs for food and shelter, health care, and education, and that government may generate the resources necessary to support public investment amenities.
- **Social Equity:** a recognition that limited resources and opportunities must be shared among all members of the community; that discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, political ideology, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, or presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability is unacceptable; and that it is necessary to proactively engage historically under-represented communities to ensure inclusion of these individuals in decision-making processes.

These core values are the fundamental principles that guide the Comprehensive Plan and are the ultimate measure of its success or failure.

## KEY STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

To further articulate the core values and policies contained in the comprehensive plan, the City has articulated a number of key strategies and initiatives that help to guide city-wide planning.

### ***Race and Social Justice Initiative***

The mission of the Race and Social Justice Initiative is to end institutionalized racism in City government and promote multiculturalism and full participation by all residents. The RSJI initiative has three goals:

- End racial disparities internal to the City through improving work force and contracting equity as well as increasing the knowledge and tools of city employees.
- Strengthen the way the City engages the community and provides services by improving outreach and public engagement as well as access to City services .
- Eliminate race-based disparities in our communities by addressing disparities, particularly in economic equity, environmental justice, criminal justice, health, and education.

Within neighborhood planning, we strive to incorporate the following Race and Social Justice best practices:

- Assess community conditions and the desired community impact
- Expand opportunity and access for individuals
- Affect systemic change
- Promote inclusive collaboration and civic engagement; and
- Educate on racial issues and raise cultural consciousness.

The Race and Social Justice Toolkit provides a specific framework for assessing the impact of neighborhood planning on race and social justice.

### ***The Urban Village Strategy***

The goal that unifies all the elements of the Comprehensive Plan is to preserve the best qualities of Seattle's distinct neighborhoods while responding positively and creatively to the pressures of change and growth. The urban village strategy attempts to implement this goal by directing growth to existing urban villages where they contribute to the vibrancy of our neighborhood centers and reinforce the benefits of city-investments in transit, parks, utilities, community centers, and other infrastructures. To ensure that this growth contributes to providing amenities that make higher densities livable, this strategy combines small changes in the city's development pattern with planning and investment initiatives.

Together, the benefits of strategy include:

- Creating vibrant and unique neighborhood centers
- Strengthening local commercial districts
- Maximizing the convenience and effectiveness of our transit systems

- Facilitating walking and biking as viable transportation options
- Creating a variety of housing options to meet the needs and preference of a diverse community
- Allowing greater community input on shaping growth through urban village focused plans
- Maximizing the effectiveness of utility investment dollars by concentrating investment needs

### ***A City for Families***

In addition to being the primary employment center of the region, Seattle will continue to be a residential city and will remain home to a wide variety of people. As the region's population grows, Seattle will continue to welcome newcomers and ensure that our community's children can choose to make their future home here as adults. The City will make special efforts to keep Seattle attractive for children and their families. To attract and retain households with children:

- The City will support neighborhoods that provide a range of commercial, cultural, educational and recreational services, and that can be easily and safely traveled on foot or by bicycle;
- The City will support increased opportunities for households with young children to secure suitable housing with yards and play areas adjacent to their homes, whether they seek to rent or buy;
- The City will encourage the development of a variety of multifamily housing types with features attractive to households with children;
- The City will use the institutional and political resources at its disposal to ensure excellent education for all students in the Seattle Public Schools as well as in private schools, institutions of higher education, and educational facilities throughout the community.

### ***Sustainable Communities***

Creating sustainable communities is a key goal of city's overall work, including neighborhood planning. In the simplest terms, "sustainability" can be defined as meeting people's needs today, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. The citizens of Seattle strive for more than merely meeting basic needs. For Seattle, sustainability means seeking *true, lasting, and shared prosperity*: providing each generation with an exceptional quality of life and ample opportunities to fulfill their aspirations, while leaving a lasting legacy of healthy natural places and robust public institutions.

Planning is fundamental to achieving sustainability. Planning helps communities assess their current status and needs, identify their end goals—and then plot a course to achieve their goals. To be fully successful, planning must address the needs and desires of a diverse citizenry, seeking comprehensive solutions to identified problems. The concept of sustainability provides planners with a powerful tool, because it helps communities to examine the full, long-term impacts of a diversity of solutions across a range of issues. In order to guide this work, it is important to understand the diverse needs of citizens. Below is one articulation of the general needs that support a Sustainable Community.

## Components of a Sustainable Community



This work also suggests three core principles for our planning work:

- Think comprehensively and holistically about the diverse goals of the city and the policy and programs that meet these multiple goals.
- Be inclusive in our work to understand the needs of different people and communities and the impacts of each decision on different populations.
- Seek to understand the short and long-term impacts of each decision and to invest in the future while remaining adaptable to changing conditions.